

CHAPTER 25

Infrastructures for Peace

Paul van Tongeren

Infrastructures for peace is a relatively new phrase. It refers to a concept that has great potential and is sorely needed, but is barely known. Excellent policy documents from the governments of Ghana and Kenya on establishing an Infrastructure for Peace have escaped attention. Andries Odendaal, who himself played an active role in the peace structure of South Africa from 1991 to 1994, has published substantively on Local Peace Councils, but these papers did not circulate widely. I owe much to the inspiring examples in Ghana and Kenya and the groundbreaking research of Andries Odendaal.

Creating an infrastructure for peace means developing mechanisms for cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in peacebuilding by promoting cooperative problem solving to conflicts and institutionalizing the response mechanisms to conflicts in order to transform them. National, district, and local peace councils are cornerstones of such an infrastructure.

In the late 1990s, there were experiments in several countries with often informal local peace councils, although some had a formal national mandate. We will focus on those with a national mandate, as the impact of a formally recognized national peace infrastructure is higher.

The understanding that peacebuilding requires sustained and deeply transformative work has contributed to the development of the concept of peace architectures or infrastructures for peace. The well-known scholar and practitioner John Paul Lederach introduced this concept in his book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* in 1997: "I have a rather modest thesis. I believe that the nature and characteristics of contemporary conflict suggest the need for a set of concepts and approaches that go beyond traditional statist diplomacy. Building peace in today's conflicts calls for long-term

commitment to establishing an infrastructure across the levels of society, an infrastructure that empowers the resources of reconciliation from within that society and maximizes the contribution from outside.”¹

His model included the need for structural transformation. Infrastructure, in his view, did not mean a rigid structure, but a process as a platform for change: a functional network that would span across the divisions and levels of society and that would ensure optimum collaboration between the main stakeholders. “As such, a platform is responsive to day-to-day issues that arise in the ebb and flow of conflict while it sustains a clear vision of the longer-term change needed in the destructive relational patterns. The creation of such a platform, I would submit, is one of the fundamental building blocks for supporting constructive social change over time.”²

It took some time before the concept began to be introduced in official arenas: At the first Standing Conference on Stability, Security and Development in Durban in 2002, African leaders signed a resolution committing them to uphold their full responsibility to set up national institutions to manage conflict and work in partnership with their civil societies. In the 2006 Progress Report on the 2001 UN Report *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, Kofi Annan stipulated that “essentially, the aim should be the creation of a sustainable, national infrastructure for peace that allows societies and their governments to resolve conflicts internally and with their own skills, institutions and resources.”³

In the April 2009 UN Secretary-General’s report to the Security Council on enhancing mediation and its support activities, paragraph 52 pertains to strengthening national/local capacity for conflict prevention/resolution:

Given the promise it holds for States to resolve inter-group tension without recourse to violence, the development of national and local mechanisms for addressing grievances and reducing tension through mediation, facilitation and dialogue has received surprisingly little attention. Recent efforts by the Inter-Agency Framework Team for Conflict Prevention and the joint program of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Department of Political Affairs on building national capacity for conflict prevention to place peace and development advisers in UNDP offices to build national and local capacity and mechanisms have begun to redress this. Although this work goes beyond mediation to include other peace processes, one promising approach is the development of a national architecture for dispute resolution through national, regional and district peace councils to provide mediation and prevent local conflicts from escalating and spreading. Given the African Union’s call for all its members to establish, by 2004, national institutions or mechanisms for prevention, management and resolution of conflicts at community and national levels, much remains to be done.⁴

Two countries that are pioneering the implementation of infrastructures of peace are Ghana and Kenya. Both had general elections in recent years, and these structures (even partly implemented) helped in preventing and reducing post election violence.

The UNDP gave the approach more attention when it organized the Experience-Sharing Seminar on Building Infrastructures for Peace in Kenya in

February 2010 in partnership with NPI-Africa, WANEP, and GPPAC.⁵ UN staff and national counterparts from governments and civil society from 12 countries in Africa were invited for this seminar, to share experiences of effective conflict prevention strategies, mechanisms, and projects; to develop an infrastructure for peace; and to inform and support the design of new initiatives in selected countries. The seminar was the first discussion among both Francophone and Anglophone countries in Africa on the issue of building national and local capacities for conflict prevention and management.

In a concept note, the UNDP described how conflict and development are linked and how the development process itself generates conflicts by changing the dynamics of economic, financial, and political power. The inevitable competition over the direction, resources, and distribution of development, if not well managed, can impede development and even reverse it if violence breaks out. Lasting peace and sustainable development often depend on an additional variable: the extent to which key sectors and groups are able to reach a stable consensus on national priorities and negotiate mutually agreed upon solutions to emerging disputes before violent tensions emerge.

To strengthen development, promote democratic processes, and prevent instability, it is imperative to ensure that better mechanisms for consensus building and dispute resolution are in place. This requires long-term, systematic efforts to raise awareness, impart skills, and strengthen institutions that will enable government and civil society representatives to respond to crises more effectively, bolster existing peace processes, and create procedures through which crises can be solved nonviolently, in other words, to develop a national infrastructure with these requisite capacities. We need a framework of relationships that allow us to manage crises and violent conflict and links different stakeholders and different levels, with national, district, and local peace councils, as further described in paragraph five.

There are different types of conflicts—on land, resources, religion, ethnicity/identity, chieftaincy, marginalization of communities, and many other issues. Often, countries lack both solid analysis of potential conflicts and the instruments and mechanisms to deal with them. We lack an overall systems approach to building peace: what are the capacities, tools, mechanisms, structures, and institutions we need to build sustainable peace?

Kai Brand-Jacobsen of the Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) has made an interesting comparison between infrastructures for peace and those in the health care sector.⁶ Similar comparisons could be made with many other fields, such as fire-prevention, education, and warfare. All involve awareness raising, training of professionals, capacity building, preventive policies, ministries, institutions, and the like. Peacebuilding needs a similar infrastructure.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE IN AFRICA

Africa has gained some experience of this concept over the past two decades: a peace infrastructure was the product of the 1991 National Peace

Accord (NPA) in South Africa. Its main tasks were to create trust and reconciliation between leaders and to prevent violence and resolve disputes. Ghana and Kenya both experienced numerous conflicts over the last two decades and are pioneers in establishing an Infrastructure for Peace.

In all three countries, the leaders were convinced that a specific structure had to be established, because the existing ones would not be adequate to create trust and reconciliation, prevent violence, and resolve conflicts. In Ghana and Kenya, the violence escalated especially around elections, so the root causes needed to be addressed to avoid derailing future elections.

South Africa⁷

The transition from apartheid to the new democratic government in South Africa was served by a fairly well-developed peace architecture with local peace committees as the primary strategy to prevent violence. These structures operated between 1991 and 1994 and were discontinued following the successful national elections of April 1994.

The local peace committees (LPCs) were a product of the National Peace Accord (NPA), signed on September 14, 1991, by the 27 main protagonists in the conflict, the government, the main political parties, and the major liberation movements, due to escalating violence in the country. Between 1985 and 1990, more than 6,000 people were killed in incidents of political violence. When President de Klerk decriminalized the antiapartheid organizations and released imprisoned political leaders, the violence did not subside, contrary to expectations. Between September 1990 and August 1991, 2,649 people were killed. The sheer number of deaths was alarming, but even more so the perception that the violence was negatively impacting on the prospect of a negotiated settlement.

Part of the NPA described a peace architecture, comprising a National Peace Committee, consisting of all signatories, which was largely inefficient and met only twice; regional peace committees (RPCs) in 11 regions of the country; local peace committees (LPCs) in all affected areas; and a National Peace Secretariat to establish and coordinate the regional and local peace committees.

The RPCs consisted of regional representatives of all signatories with a presence in each region, as well as other relevant regional civil society formations including religious organizations, trade unions, business and industry, and traditional authorities. The police and defense forces were also represented, as were relevant government ministries. RPCs oversaw the establishment of LPCs, giving priority to those towns that experienced violence. LPCs focused on inclusivity, welcoming CSOs that wanted to be part of them. The main tasks of LPCs were to

- create trust and reconciliation between community leaders, including the police and army;
- prevent violence and intimidation; and
- resolve disputes that could lead to public violence.

The violence did escalate, but the general consensus is that the escalation would have been far worse if the LPCs had not existed.

LPCs facilitated dialogue at the local level where, for the first time, inclusive assemblies of stakeholders were able to address local issues jointly. However, LPCs were powerless in the face of spoilers or when political will was lacking. Much of the aggression was deliberately stoked by the so-called Third Force (sections of the security establishment), and the soft power of facilitation and mediation were unable to address the deliberate, planned violence.

Andries Odendaal identified some lessons that may have relevance for local peacebuilding processes elsewhere:

- The process of establishing a LPC was as important as the national mandate to establish them. In terms of legitimacy, they stood on two legs. One leg was the mandate by the NPA: without such a national agreement the establishment of LPCs in most places would have been met by resistance from all sides. The other leg was local buy-in into the concept: The NPA was an elite pact, and at the grassroots level, pockets of strong resistance existed. Presence of the police on the LPC, for instance, was very contentious: policemen were the face of the enemy in the townships. The establishment of an LPC had to be rooted in the conscious decision of local actors to engage with the peace process. Therefore, full-time field workers were employed and tasked with facilitating processes to establish LPCs, which happened only once all the significant actors had received a mandate from their members.
- The lesson is that it cannot be taken for granted that local communities will make peace just because national leadership has made that decision. The national agreement provides an opportunity, a framework and a legitimate mandate, but in the final analysis local actors must take responsibility for their own peace.
- LPCs and RPCs relied on a functioning peace architecture: They could not have operated in an administrative or logistical vacuum. The peace architecture that was set up provided support in terms of funding; a functioning network (LPCs were linked to Regional Peace Committees and the National Secretariat); the professional services of full-time staff; and the presence of UN and other international monitors;
- The NPA created space for substantial civil society involvement: Without the input by civil society the process would have had no chance of success. The NPA itself was the product of a joint initiative by the business sector and the churches. The negotiation of the text of the NPA was cochaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, on behalf of the churches, and John Hall, on behalf of the business community. The regional bodies and LPCs were chaired by civil society figures. They occupied the middle ground and kept all parties together, countering strong centrifugal forces, and carried out most of the facilitation, mediation, and violence prevention work. They can best be described by Lederach's term *insider-partials*. They were not impartial, but committed to the greater good of preventing violence and finding workable solutions. The lesson is that the business of peace cannot be left solely to the politicians. By creating a framework that allowed insider-partials the space to operate, the peace process gained much in depth and breadth.

- “[Establishing a peace architecture] was a move toward identifying key people in critical locations who, working through a network, would begin to build an infrastructure capable of sustaining the general progression toward peace. Central to the overall functioning of the peace process was the development of institutional capacities through the training of a broad array of individuals to respond to the volatile period of transition. What these approaches suggest is that the middle range holds the potential for helping to establish a relationship- and skill-based infrastructure for sustaining the peacebuilding process.”⁸

Ghana⁹

Ghana has had a stable and democratic government since 1992, but is burdened with a troubled past of military coups and dictatorial rule. On the surface, Ghana is peaceful. “However, students of West African history would admit that a mere five years before the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte D’Ivoire, no one in those countries could have predicted the occurrence of conflict. A perception of peace and stability is not a guarantee of long term peace.”¹⁰

A study commissioned by the Ministry of Interior identified several conflict factors, including chieftaincy, civil and labor unrest, inter/intra-political party conflicts, land, religion, ethnic/identity conflicts, minerals, and economic resources among numerous others.

Twenty-three conflicts were recorded in the three northern regions of the country between 1980 and 2002. Many community-based and interethnic conflicts were intractable because the justice system was not functioning well and many court cases remained unresolved. When violence broke out, official commissions of inquiry were established, but their recommendations were not implemented. The official response to these conflicts was law and order based: The government deployed police and military units in conflict areas to keep the peace, with very limited official engagement on the structural issues underlying the conflicts.

One of these conflicts, the Konkomba-Nanumba war in 1994–1995, left 5,000 people dead. At this time, civil society organizations combined efforts to facilitate peacebuilding, and an Inter-NGO Consortium was formed. The consortium intervened by facilitating processes of dialogue and negotiation that had been successful in restoring peace in a number of these conflicts. Civil society’s approach contrasted sharply to that of the government, by seeking to uncover the deeper sources of conflict and focus on dialogue, deeper mutual understanding, joint problem solving, and reconciliation.

In Ghana, two state systems exist in practice: a traditional state controlled by tribal chiefs, without formal political authority; and a modern state controlled at the local level by the district chief executive. In many communities, the real authority is the chief. In community conflicts, the district chief executive is expected to intervene and ensure the resolution of conflicts.

One eruption of violence led to the slaying of the king of Dagbon and many of his elders in 2002 in a conflict concerning succession to the chieftain’s throne. The government of Ghana feared that these events might derail upcoming

elections and declared a state of emergency in the region. The regional government established the Northern Region Peace Advocacy Council as a mediation and conflict resolution mechanism to deal with the issues of trust among the factions, as restoring confidence and relationships was crucial.

The council was composed of representatives chosen by the stakeholders themselves including chiefs, women, youth groups, and representatives of the security agencies. A series of capacity building and conflict transformation workshops were organized for stakeholder groups. The government had taken notice of the success of civil society's methodology and approached the UN for assistance. Following a UN mission, a peace and governance advisor was appointed.

With the success of the Northern Region Peace Advisory Council, the government decided to explore the possibility of extending the peace council concept to the rest of the country. A range of consultations was organized with many different stakeholders at local, regional, and national levels. The outcome of these consultations was the development of the national architecture for peace.

The National Architecture for Peace

The national architecture for peace works toward systematic change through changing the context in which conflicts occur and strengthening the institutions of the state to manage conflicts better. It consists of representatives of relevant stakeholders as well as individual Ghanaians who enjoy high levels of trust and respect in society. Councils exist at national, regional, and district levels with the mandate to facilitate dialogue, problem solving, and reconciliation processes at the level of their jurisdiction. They are served by a body of professional peace promotion officers connected to the 10 regional peace advisory councils. These are independent persons of integrity and credibility within the region, nominated by the regional governments in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. They have been trained in conflict analysis, negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation as well as building trust and confidence among groups. They perform strategic roles advising regional governments on maintaining peace in the region, but they also coordinate civil society engagement in peacebuilding.

The NPC and RPCs were trained by the NGO WANEP, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding. Furthermore, a Peace Building Support Unit was established within the Ministry of the Interior to oversee support and coordination from government agencies. The National Architecture for Peace in Ghana was issued by the Ministry of Interior in May 2006.

The process of establishing it is a work in progress: The National Peace Council (NPC) is in place and is an independent body, composed of 11 persons that carry leverage and high moral standing and respect with the citizens, including the Roman Catholic cardinal; the national chief imam; a bishop; a pastor; and a professor. The caliber of these individuals and the integrity they bring both individually and collectively to the NPC makes it a nonpartisan body providing a national platform for consensus building on potentially divisive

issues as well as promoting national reconciliation. The NPC played a major role in ensuring peaceful elections in 2008 and a smooth transfer of power through discreet meetings with stakeholders that defused considerable tension. In March 2011, a National Peace Council Bill was unanimously adopted by Parliament, which will further strengthen Ghana's peace structure.

Regional peace advisory councils were established in most regions, but not all. In some regions, they were merged with regional security structures. The regional peace advisory council in the north also played a very constructive role in ensuring peace during the elections of 2008.

No district peace advisory councils have yet been established.

Conclusion on the Peace Architecture of Ghana

The National Architecture for Peace in Ghana is the first official national-level program on building peace in Africa, implementing the Resolution of African leaders in 2002 in Durban. Ghana's contribution to the peacebuilding field includes the acknowledgement of multiple roles that different actors and stakeholders are required to play in constructing peace in communities. Unless attention is paid to the structural issues in conflicts, peace may be temporary. Relationships need to be mended, yet those injured by the conflict need to be assisted to find closure: if they feel that justice has been done, their personal and group healing can move at a faster pace. With a historical legacy of oppression and dominance between groups, the process by which peace is constructed is as important as the issues that are discussed at the table: Acknowledgement of equality, participation, and respect contributes to empowerment and ownership of peacebuilding processes in communities.¹¹

The success of the process of establishing the National Architecture for Peace in Ghana had much to do with the quality support and capacity building provided by civil society and the UN system, and especially highly professional UN peace and development advisors. At the conceptual level, there is a clear distinction between the roles of the peace council and that of government structures. On the whole the architecture, as it exists on paper at the moment, is a textbook example of a well-designed infrastructure.¹²

Kenya¹³

Kenya is beset by a multitude of local conflicts that have the potential to escalate at any moment, as a result of resource crises, land tenure issues, and political machinations. It gives us a fascinating example of a bottom-up process to establish a peace architecture. The process started in 1993 with an initiative by a group of women of the Wajir district of Kenya, bordering Somalia and Ethiopia, in response to a highly destructive cycle of violent conflict in that region, and the failure of state institutions to regulate conflict, provide security, and promote development.

The initiative consisted of civil society actors working together to sensitize the population to the need for peace. They engaged the elders of the different clans and set up a mediation process between them. In this process, civil

society actors worked with and involved representatives of formal authority, particularly the district commissioner and a member of Parliament. After some time, it became clear that some form of formalization was needed, so the peace initiatives were integrated into the one structure, the District Development Committee, in the district administration in Kenya that brought government, NGOs, and citizen groups together. In 1995 the Wajir Peace and Development Committee was formed, with the district commissioner as chairperson. Members included the heads of all government departments, representatives of the various peace groups, religious leaders, NGO representatives, chiefs, and security officers.

The success of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee in bringing peace to the district and in maintaining it soon led to the spread of the model to other districts in the northern part of the country.

The government was aware of the numerous types of conflicts in Kenya, including ethnic divisions, marginalization of communities, livestock rustling, land conflicts, and cross-border conflicts. In 2001, it established a National Steering Committee (NSC) on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management. The Office of the President, through the NSC, embarked on a process toward the development of a national policy on peacebuilding and conflict management in 2004. The National Policy, including the lessons learned from the postelection violence of 2008, was published at the end of September 2009 by the Office of the President. Both in the early years of the NSC and after the recent post-election violence, broad consultations took place, between the government and non-state actors—with all involved ministries, academia, development partners, regional organizations, CSOs, women, youth groups, communities, private sector, and local authorities—and in 12 regional Stakeholders' Validation workshops.

The vision of the policy is “a peaceful and stable Kenya.” The mission is “to promote sustainable peace through a collaborative institutional framework between state and non-state actors.” Further progress has been made recently by a constitutional referendum and the adoption of a new constitution in autumn 2010. All of this was accomplished without a single incident of violence.

The Peace Architecture

To achieve the vision and mission, the policy proposes a peace architecture with the following structure:

- *A National Peace Commission (NPC)*, appointed by the president with approval by parliament, with 13 commissioners, one from each province and 5 others representing women, youth, civil society, persons with disabilities, and academia, all with a national reputation. The commission is to be supported by a secretariat, headed by a secretary. The work of the NPC shall be guided by bipartisanship and independence.
- *A National Peace Forum*, to be constituted as a platform for consultations, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination by all peace actors and stakeholders.

- *Provincial Peace Fora*, to be constituted as a platform for consultations and coordination at the provincial levels.
- *District Peace Committees (DPC)*, hybrid institutions that bring together synergies between traditional and formal mechanisms for conflict resolution.
- *NPC Secretariat*, to be the management arm of the commission.

Following the postelection violence in 2007 and early 2008, the National Accord and Reconciliation Act 2008 recommended the establishment of district peace committees in all of Kenya's districts, with priority given to the Rift Valley, the area where most of the violence had occurred.

The NPC and national policy and coordination strategies are incomplete. Those districts that already had peace committees reported much less violence than others during the conflict, a fact that considerably raised the importance of enhancing local capacities for peace. There is a fair amount of consensus among researchers and observers that the peace committees have, on the whole, been successful, especially in the pastoralist areas. They have demonstrated their ability to manage intercommunity conflict and to contain or prevent violence, were able to integrate a broad range of local stakeholders who were locally perceived as relevant for conflict resolution, and tackled cases of interethnic conflict.

Challenges and Dilemmas¹⁴

Similar to the Ghanaian situation, the peace committees in Kenya's pastoralist areas operated in the vacuum created by the weakness of government institutions, in particular the justice system, to provide security and justice to communities. This weakness was partly caused by the disjunction between two different paradigms of justice: that of the clans and that of the state. The mediation offered by peace committees involved more than problem solving; they also mediated at the level of fundamental values underpinning the justice system. At certain points they fundamentally contradicted the constitutional values of the state.

EXAMPLES OF INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE IN OTHER CONTINENTS

Several countries have experience with infrastructures for peace in different modalities, different contexts, and sometimes different vocabulary, where the word *peace* is not mentioned. Sometimes these function only at the local or the national level, with varying connection to the formal governance structures of the country.

Nicaragua

In his book *Building Peace*,¹⁵ Lederach describes peace commissions and elaborates on Nicaragua in the late 1980s and South Africa in the early 1990s. Throughout the 1980s, multiple internal wars raged in Central America. The

Central American peace accord that was signed in Guatemala by the five countries in the region provided mechanisms that dealt with the internal situations of each country through a coordinated plan. The Nicaraguan government moved quickly to set up a national peace commission, region-specific commissions, and a network of local commissions.

In fact, two independent systems of peace commissions were established. In the south of Nicaragua, religious leaders joined forces at the peak of the war to negotiate conflict-free zones, forming small commissions of local residents to foster dialogue between the Sandinista government and contra rebels at the community level. The original mission of the peace commissions was to document and investigate human rights violations. Over time, it came to include all sorts of intracommunity disputes, land conflicts, and crime. By 1990, 60 commissions had arisen, performing communication and mediation functions to promote dialogue between Sandinista and contra rebels.

The model for this conciliation effort was that of an insider-partial mediation effort, involving intermediaries from within the conflict who as individuals enjoyed the trust and confidence of one side, but who as a team provide balance in their mediation work. Church leaders built durable local institutions for intracommunity conflict resolution.

The second type of peace commission, as a component of the regional peace settlement, was the International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV) of the OAS, which started work in 1990. It was originally charged with overseeing the demobilization of over 22,000 contra combatants in the northern and western regions of the country. By 1995, the CIAV supported the creation of 96 peace commissions working on mediation, verification of human rights protections, promotion of human rights, and facilitation of community projects.

The peace commissions permitted an unprecedented space for dialogue in which citizens could safely express their views.

The Philippines¹⁶

In 1986, the People Power Revolution in the Philippines led to the fall of the Marcos Dictatorship. Subsequently, peace talks with all rebel forces were initiated, the peace process as a government policy was formalized, and the Office of the Peace Commissioner under the Office of the President established.

The post of presidential adviser on the peace process (PAPP) with cabinet rank, was created, charged with the management of the comprehensive peace process, and assisted by a fulltime secretariat (OPAPP). Three underlying principles of the peace process were adopted (in 1993):

- A comprehensive peace process should be community-based, reflecting the sentiments, values and principles important to all Filipinos.
- A comprehensive peace process aims to forge a new social compact for a just, equitable, humane and pluralistic society.
- A comprehensive peace process seeks a principal and peaceful resolution of the internal armed conflicts, with neither blame nor surrender, but with dignity for all concerned.

In 2001 the government decided on a Policy Framework for Peace—affirming the guiding principles and the “Six Paths to Peace” of the previous administration—and formulated a National Peace Plan, with two components: (1) peacemaking and peacekeeping (seeking to end all insurgency-related armed conflicts through peace negotiations and to reduce the level of violence through local and civil society–led peace initiatives) and (2) peacebuilding and conflict prevention (seeking to address the major causes of insurgency, eliminate sources of grievance, rehabilitate and develop conflict-affected areas, and heal the wounds created by the long years of armed conflict).

The government established government peace negotiating panels for negotiations with the different rebel groups. OPAPP under the new administration did convene a consultation of civil society, in August 2010, who decided to loosely band together to share and develop strategies in engaging the peace process. The body is tentatively called Kilos Kapayapaan, or Action for Peace. It will serve as a de facto consultative cum advisory body to OPAPP but will remain independent of it.

Nepal¹⁷

In March 2007, the government of Nepal decided to create a Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, becoming the second nation in the world with such a ministry after the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace in the Solomon Islands, and followed by Costa Rica in 2009 with a Ministry of Justice and Peace.

Root causes of the conflict in Nepal included feudalism, the exclusion of minorities, weak governance, and government neglect, with the result that most districts and villages had their tensions. The conflict in Nepal had rural roots and was partly a rural revolt against perceived discrimination and neglect. Peace at the local level had to be secured, or it would undermine the entire peace process.

The decision to establish local peace councils (LPCs) was taken as early as 2005, but the implementation was difficult and became contested. Some questioned the independence of the LPCs when they became closely linked with and reliant upon the later established Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction. There was reluctance to establish joint multiparty control over the peace architecture. Some 60 LPCs have been formed, but their effectiveness is an issue

ADDED VALUE OF THE CONCEPT

There are many different reasons to give far more focus and weight to infrastructures for peace and aim for a systemic approach to peacebuilding.

Development and Conflict

Development in itself generates new conflicts on top of existing root causes, by changing economic and power relations, and the current structures and mechanisms in many countries are not appropriate to deal with them. Community-based and interethnic conflicts are often intractable, partly because the justice

system is not functioning well, and the (local) government fails to provide security. Weak governments unable to deliver services again give rise to conflicts.

Sustainable Solutions Are Needed: A Systemic Approach to Peacebuilding

When a conflict is escalating, it is not enough to look just at that specific conflict and address the symptoms only. The root causes should be addressed, and sustainable structures and mechanisms established to transform the conflicts. Otherwise, these conflicts will flare up during elections or other events.

Some countries have democratic processes and institutions that can help address conflicts. Many countries, however, lack the instruments and institutions to address those conflicts systematically. In the cases of Ghana and Kenya—countries perceived by many as peaceful—it is evident that many different types of conflicts existed and that the governments came to the conclusion that structural conflicts were continuing to destabilize the country, forming a threat to development, security, and peace, especially during elections. These governments understood that we lack an overall systems approach to peacebuilding: what are the capacities, tools, mechanisms, structures, and institutions we need to build sustainable peace in countries?

Electoral Violence

Elections are increasingly becoming contested, thus *triggering* underlying tensions and root causes of conflict, as seen in the case of Kenya in 2008. Elections will be held in dozens of other countries in the coming years. There is great concern in the international community that much more electoral violence may occur as a result.

Peace Councils Have Helped to Prevent or Reduce Violent Conflict

It is often difficult to prove the prevention of violent conflict. We already saw how in the early 1990s the South African LPCs contributed toward containing the spiral of violence, which observers agreed would have been far worse if the LPCs had not existed. In Ghana and Kenya, the existence of these structures helped in preventing and reducing violent conflict during recent elections.

Expected Increase in Violent Conflicts

Another reason to speed up the establishment of infrastructures for peace is that experts expect an increase in violent conflicts. The UN report on mediation states:

Although there is solid evidence that efforts by the United Nations and our partners have made an impact in reducing the number of conflicts around the world, new dangers are on the horizon. Competition for scarce resources is a powerful

driver of conflict, especially when added to existing grievances between groups. As a result of the economic downturn, climate change and the growing depletion of resources, from arable land to water to oil, disputes within and between States may become more common in the future. Our Organization and our partners will need all of the knowledge, skill, wisdom and resources we can muster to meet this daunting challenge. . . . We, the United Nations, have a responsibility to “we the peoples” to professionalize our efforts to resolve conflicts constructively rather than destructively and to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.¹⁸

With an expected increase in the diversity of citizens within each country, tensions will increase as well, and the promotion of social inclusion is very important.

We are not prepared for such an increase of violent conflicts.

Prevention Is Far Less Costly

If we wait until the conflict escalates, it is *more difficult to intervene* and *far more costly*: the toll in lives and in all other disastrous effects of violent conflicts, as well as the financial cost. Governments still spend 1,885 times as much on the military as they do on the prevention of conflict¹⁹ and spend almost nothing on supporting civilians to stop violence. Peacekeeping troops in a country easily cost billions. Building the infrastructure for Peace in Ghana, on the other hand, cost only some 2.5 million dollars over the first three years.

A Positive, Proactive, Participatory, and Inclusive Approach

Responses to conflicts are often reactive, law-and-order based, top-down, and aimed more at managing the conflict than solving it. The infrastructures for peace approach, on the other hand, is proactive, participatory, inclusive, nonviolent, transformative, and principle based. It is positive in character and stimulates working with everything and everyone on behalf of the greater good.

One of the advantages of infrastructure for peace is that it makes the connection between the capacity and the conflict: people trained in conflict resolution and transformation are given a role in transforming the conflict.

The Approach Includes All Stakeholders at All Levels

A crucial component of such an infrastructure is to establish a platform for all peace actors and stakeholders for dialogue, consultation, cooperation, and coordination. Peace and peacebuilding are complex processes and urgently need such a platform. This approach acknowledges that sustainable peace needs a collaborative institutional framework between state and non-state actors.

MAIN COMPONENTS OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEACE

The following main components were for the most part taken from the policy documents from the governments of Ghana and Kenya on their national peacebuilding architecture.²⁰

- *National, district, and local peace councils.* The peace councils consist of highly respected persons of great integrity who are capable of bridging political divides and who possess competence, knowledge, and experience in matters relating to conflict transformation and peace, nominated by a broad range of different stakeholders. The councils' mandate will be to promote sustainable peace and human security. The work of the NPC shall be guided by bipartisanship and independence. The main objectives and strategies that LPCs have pursued in practice have been violence reduction, promoting dialogue, problem solving, community-building, and reconciliation.
- *National peace forum.* A platform for consultation, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination of peace actors and stakeholders.
- *A government unit or department on peacebuilding and a bill on infrastructures for peace.* One unit or department of the government will develop the overall government policy on peacebuilding together with the national peace council and the national peace forum and implement it.
- *A whole-of-government approach.* This unit or department will liaise and cooperate with other ministries or departments with related policies on peace, justice, defense, foreign affairs, social cohesion, conflict resolution in schools, environment, and social and economic development and health.
- *Building national capacities for peace.* The focus is to increase the capacity of peacebuilding institutions of government departments, peace councils, and others, including CSO groups. Broad-based skills training will be offered to functionaries, public servants, or members of civil society in peacebuilding and conflict management, including conflict analysis, conflict early warning and response, conflict resolution, and supporting dialogue processes.
- *Traditional perspectives on conflict resolution.* Traditional perspectives, understanding, and solutions to conflict will be offered and strengthened.
- *Promotion of a shared vision of society and a culture of peace.* Common values and a shared vision of society will be promoted and policies and structures established to implement them. Values of reconciliation, tolerance, trust and confidence building, mediation, and dialogue as responses to conflict will be highlighted. With an expected increase in the diversity of citizens within each country, the promotion of social inclusion and cohesion is more important than ever.²¹
- *Peace education.* Peace education and the celebration of the International Day of Peace, September 21, will be part of such an overall policy.
- *Establishing and implementing an infrastructure for peace.* In the initial phase of establishing an infrastructure, all stakeholders will be consulted: government and non-state actors and different sectors of society at the national, district, and local level. Analyzing the root causes of conflict in a country shall be a participatory and inclusive effort. When such a policy has been approved, it has to be operationalized, and regular assessments have to be executed.²²
- *Budget.* Peacebuilding and conflict management intervention strategies require long-term funding by governments, donors, NGOs, and communities.

These components are not a straitjacket, but *possible* pillars for a national infrastructure for peace. It is essential that each process, structure, and mechanism is *authentic* and designed by the stakeholders themselves or in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

Listing the main components also aims to make more visible what a peace infrastructure can look like. It is an attempt at a systemic approach, a system with different components, but it should be context specific in each country.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED²³

- The value of *bottom-up* and *consultative processes*: Meaningful experiences with a regional peace council in Wajir (Kenya) and in Northern Ghana worked well and helped de-escalate the violence toward more sustainable solutions and motivate national leaders to set up such structures at the national level as well. In both cases, informal LPCs inspired the formalization of LPCs, and a highly participatory and inclusive consultation process was chosen, which contributed to the legitimacy and success of the Peace Infrastructure.
- *Importance of a national mandate*: The existence of a national mandate for LPCs creates opportunities and can be supportive for the LPCs, but brings some challenges as well. Although the mandate confers legitimacy and access to state resources and national political leadership, it also opens up LPCs to political manipulation and makes them vulnerable to the fragility of a national peace process.
- *Composition*: The composition of LPCs is another important issue. They should be inclusive of the main protagonists, and they should include respected leaders from civil society who can lead the peace process. Any LPC has to include individuals that come from different sides of the conflict: both “doves,” people who regard the achievement of peace as more important than pursuing sectarian interests, and “hawks,” people that are distrustful of peace because they see their interests threatened by the necessary compromises of peace. With hawks absent, LPCs may lack credibility and local leverage. The ideal is to have a good mix of hawks and doves on the LPC. LPCs should include insider-partials, that is, persons typically drawn from civil society who are respected and trusted and have the personal integrity and gravitas to provide leadership to the peace process. Rather than politicians, these insider-partials should occupy the leadership positions on the LPC. What should be prevented at all cost is to allow one party to capture the leadership position of a LPC and dominate from there. The best is to appoint persons in this position on the basis of consensus. In South Africa, LPC chairpersons were elected on the basis of consensus. They were often from the religious or business sector. When LPCs failed to find a chairperson acceptable to all sides, two cochairpersons were elected. They proved to be very effective. Of all actors at the local level, the LPC chairpersons have made the most substantial contribution to local peacebuilding.²⁴
- *Proven impact*: We saw that the South African LPCs contributed toward containing the spiral of violence. Observers agreed that the situation would be far worse if the LPCs had not existed. Ghana and Kenya both recently had elections, and the existence of these structures has helped in preventing and reducing violence. Based on studies of LPCs in 12 countries, Andries Odendaal concludes that LPCs can have the following impact:
 - LPCs can enable communication between former protagonists, thus dealing with potentially destructive rumors, fear, and mistrust.

- LPCs are effective in preventing or containing violence through a strategy of joint planning for, and monitoring of, potentially violent events.
- LPCs can facilitate or mediate in local peacemaking processes, leading to local peace agreements.
- LPCs can facilitate dialogue between various sections of the community, thereby strengthening social cohesion, which is a necessary precondition for governance.
- LPCs can facilitate reconciliation.
- LPCs can enable a flow of information between the local and national levels, so that peacebuilding challenges experienced at local level can receive proper attention at the national level.

CHALLENGES

What LPCs Cannot Do

- LPCs cannot *enforce peace*, especially not against spoiler groups that are bent on using violence.
- LPCs cannot deal with the *structural root causes* of conflict.

Relationship with the Government

A starting point for establishing an infrastructure in Ghana was the fact that the court system did not work and conflicts were not resolved; in Wajir (Kenya), the government failed to provide security. In the described cases of South Africa, Ghana, and Kenya, practical solutions had to be found for involving the government—for instance by making the district commissioner chair of the Peace and Development Committee in Wajir—while maintaining an independent position for the National Peace Council. When a government cannot respect this independence and tries to dominate the peace infrastructure—as happened in Nepal—it does not work. Colonial powers imposed a state model on their colonies that did not fit to their existing structures at that moment. We saw how the governments of Ghana and Kenya recognized the critical role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. The District Peace Committee in Kenya “is to be a hybrid institution that brings together synergies between traditional and formal mechanisms for conflict resolution.”

- *Authoritarian governments.* Infrastructures for peace only work when governments are open for consultation and cooperation with civil society. What to do if they are not open for cooperation and when civil society is still weak?
- There seems to be a need for *hybrid political orders*.²⁵ Infrastructures for peace can be a bridge in this respect.
- *Electoral violence:* During elections, underlying tensions in society regularly come to the surface and lead to violent conflict. The dates of elections are often decided long in advance. Estimates about the potential for electoral violence can be made. This gives the opportunity to use the probability of electoral violence, to start preparing for peaceful elections long before they take place and aiming for establishing more sustainable peace structures in a country.
- *Lessons from other infrastructures:* Many sectors of society have some infrastructure with well-defined policies, training and education, strategies, ministries,

institutions such as hospitals and armies, and so on. What can we learn from other infrastructures in the fields of health, education, fire prevention, waging of war, and others?

- *Costs*: What is the cost-effectiveness of infrastructures for peace? What are the costs of establishing such an infrastructure, and what would be the costs if it failed or if it were not established at all?

EPILOGUE

Infrastructures for peace is a relatively unknown approach. Much more research has to be undertaken, but there are enough successful examples of local peace councils and of a provisional peace infrastructure in some countries that suggest that it works and helps in reducing and preventing violent conflict.

Taking into account that most countries have no adequate structure and mechanisms to deal with all their (structural) conflicts, a systemic approach is needed to establish such structures. Especially because an increase in violent conflicts is expected, we should prepare ourselves better.

Infrastructures at the Regional and Global Levels

One of the key principles of infrastructures for peace is the acknowledgement that the main stakeholders in peace should have a dialogue with each other and look for ways of consultation and cooperation. This counts not only on the *national* level, but on the *regional* and *global* levels as well. Regional organizations, the United Nations, governments, civil society organizations, and academia rarely meet to discuss how they could cooperate on specific issues of peace and conflict. There is a clear need for a *multi-stakeholder dialogue on peace-building* at the regional and global levels.

NOTES

1. John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997), xvi and 49–51, on peace commissions; see also *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (2003), especially chapter 7, “Process-Structures as Platforms for Change,” 40–48; and *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (2005), especially 47–49.

2. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 47.

3. UN General Assembly, progress report on the prevention of armed conflict, 16, http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/prevention/build_national/N0639322.pdf.

4. Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on enhancing mediation and its support activities, April 8, 2009, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/docs/S-2009-189.pdf>.

5. Background documents for the seminar can be found at <http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1#par2544>.

6. Kai Brand-Jacobsen, “Towards an Effective Architecture-Infrastructure for Peace: Learning from Medical Health,” by Annex 2 of GPPAC (working paper on infrastructures for peace, July 2010), <http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Programmes/EWER/I4P/Infrastructures%20for%20Peace%20July%202010.doc>. Johan Galtung was the first to compare peace to health in “Theories of Peace, Theories of Health: Some Isomorphism” (1991) and “Health as a Bridge for Peace” (1997).

7. This short description is mainly based on the case report on South Africa, 1991–1994, in Andries Odendaal, *An Architecture for Building Peace at Local Level: A Comparative Study of the Use of Local Peace Forums*. The study is forthcoming from UNDP-BCPR; see also Susan Collin Marks, *Watching the Wind: Conflict Resolution during South Africa's Transition to Democracy* (USIP Press, 2000).

8. Lederach, *Building Peace*, on the cases of Nicaragua and South Africa, 51.

9. The section on Ghana is based on the following documents: *National Architecture for Peace in Ghana* (2006), issued by the Ministry of Interior; *National Peace Council Bill* (2011) and Andries Odendaal, *Local Peacebuilding in Ghana*, both at <http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1#par2544>; Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo, "Designing an Architecture for Peace: A Framework of Conflict Transformation in Ghana," *LEJIA* 7, no. 1 (2010); Emmanuel Bombande, "Ghana—Developing an Institutional Framework for Sustainable Peace—UN, Government and Civil Society Collaboration for Conflict Prevention," 46–54, in *GPPAC Issue Paper on Joint Action for Prevention: Civil Society and Government Cooperation on Conflict and Peacebuilding*, <http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Programmes/Interaction%20and%20Advocacy/Issue%20Paper%204%20December%202007%20Gov—CSO%20cooperation.pdf>.

10. Ozonnia Ojielo, *Designing an Architecture for Peace*, 9.

11. Conclusions from Ozonnia Ojielo, in *Designing an Architecture for Peace*, 9.

12. Additional conclusions from Andries Odendaal, in *Local Peacebuilding in Ghana*.

13. The section on Kenya is based on the following documents: Office of the President, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security, *National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management* (September 2009), and Andries Odendaal, *Local Peace and Development Committees in Kenya*, both at <http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1#par2544>; George Kut, "Towards the National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management," 38–45, in *GPPAC Issue Paper on Joint Action for Prevention: Civil Society and Government Cooperation on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*, <http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Programmes/Interaction%20and%20Advocacy/Issue%20Paper%204%20December%202007%20Gov-CSO%20cooperation.pdf>. See also George Wachira, *Citizens in Action: Making Peace in the Post-Election Crisis in Kenya* (2008), 37, 61, <http://bit.ly/KenyaCCP>.

14. Andries Odendaal, *Local Peace and Development Committees in Kenya*, 14.

15. *Ibid.*, 49; see also the case study of Andries Odendaal on Nicaragua in the discussion paper "An Architecture for Building Peace at Local Level: A Comparative Study of the Use of Local Peace Forums," forthcoming from UNDP-BCPR.

16. <http://www.opapp.gov.py>.

17. GPPAC issue paper 4: Manish Thapa, "Joint Action for Prevention: Civil Society and Government Cooperation on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding," *Nepal, Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction: A Foundation for Peace*, 55–61, <http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Programmes/Interaction%20and%20Advocacy/Issue%20Paper%204%20December%202007%20Gov-CSO%20cooperation.pdf>; Andries Odendaal and Retief Olivier, *Local Peace Committees: Some Reflections and Lessons Learned*, 7–10, <http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Programmes/EWER/I4P/9.%20LOCAL%20PEACE%20COUNCILS.pdf>.

18. United Nations Secretary-General. 2009b. *Report of the Secretary-General of the UN to the Security Council on Enhancing Mediation and Its Support Activities*. S/2009/189. April. New York: United Nations. <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/6862033.html>.

19. OECD figures, from SMART POWER, International Taskforce for Preventive Diplomacy, February 2009.

20. *National Architecture for Peace in Ghana* (2006), issued by the Ministry of Interior; *National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management* (2009), by Office of the

President, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security, both documents at <http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1#par2544>.

21. The Club of Madrid Shared Societies project has developed a government audit of the Club of Madrid commitments for shared societies, www.thesharedsocietiesproject.clubmadrid.org/project-documents/commitments-and-approaches.

22. Ibid.

23. Most of the conclusions are taken from Andries Odendaal, "An Architecture for Building Peace at Local Level: A Comparative Study of the Use of Local Peace Forums," discussion paper, forthcoming from UNDP-BCPR.

24. Odendaal, Andries, and Retief Olivier. 2008. Local Peace Committees: Some Reflections and Lessons Learned. Report funded by USAID for the Nepal Transition to Peace (NTTP) Initiative, implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) Kathmandu, Nepal, <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN032148.pdf>.

25. Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements, and Anna Nolan, 2009. "On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: What is Failing—States in the Global South or Research and Politics in the West?" in *Building Peace in the Absence of States: Challenging the Discourse on State Failure*, ed. Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle, 15–35. Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 8. Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available at www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5.